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## Montgomery County may create development coordination office

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Montgomery County Council member Duchy Trachtenberg has proposed setting up an office to coordinate development projects. The goal is to avoid problems such as those that arose in the construction of Clarksburg Town Center, where after five years, officials and residents are still mired in disagreement over who will pay for road construction, a new library and other community features.

"With this legislation, we can provide all of the stakeholders in the development process . . . with the assurances that our critically important development efforts will move forward efficiently, effectively, expeditiously and at reasonable cost to our county," she said.

Trachtenberg (D-At Large) unveiled her plan Wednesday with support from community groups, the planning agency's staff and developers in the White Flint area, which the county hopes will be its next large, mixed-use development.

Whether the county can fund such an office is uncertain. County Executive Isiah Leggett (D), who has not taken a position on Trachtenberg's bill, is facing a \$600 million shortfall in the county's \$4.47 billion spending program. Later this month, the county-funded Clarksburg ombudsman's office will disappear, a victim of fiscal belt-tightening.

Trachtenberg has won the backing of three other council members -- Phil Andrews (D-Gaithersburg-Rockville), Roger Berliner (D-Potomac-Bethesda) and Michael Knapp (D-Upcounty) -- but needs five votes to secure a majority on the council.

She said the measure ultimately could save the county millions of dollars in legal fees and other costs associated with fights such as the one over Clarksburg Town Center. "It's just common sense to have someone in charge," she said.